
***“Heroes of Small Business”
Congressional Hearing***

Testimony

Kirk Farra, President



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Members of Congress, guests, my name is Kirk Farra and it is a great honor and privilege to be here today, telling you the story of a small business named In-Synch Systems. We produce software for the law enforcement community.

As far as an introduction of myself, I would rather spend my time sharing who In-Synch is. Similar to my own upbringing, In-Synch Systems was born and raised just outside Pittsburgh, PA, with a strong work ethic and an understanding of the value of a dollar. It grew from an ideal of creating a greater good for those who serve each of our communities on a daily basis, thus our mission statement is “We connect our customers with the technologies, services, and people that promote safe and just communities”. If my two children were here today they would tell you of the fifth chair In-Synch occupies at the dinner table or how it always gets to sit up front in the car. My wife, Kathy, also deeply involved, would comment on the lack of a conversation without In-Synch and however unhealthy this may or may not sound, it is a reality to those of us who are responsible for the advancement and continuity of a small business in today’s economy. I myself would say that In-Synch is a member of my family and it is vital to the families for which it employs.

In-Synch Systems is a small business by choice, tight and cohesive, aggressive and innovative, and entirely focused on our customers. We have reliance upon each other, each as a critical part of the team, to improve our business foundation on a daily basis through constant effort and ingenuity. It is what makes us who we are and what has allowed us to struggle together year after year and survive in a competitive economy.

Our foundation, a product built over ten years by a staff of between three and thirteen employees, is a law enforcement records management software capable of advancing the small, rural police departments to have the capabilities of larger city departments, providing cities and their officers with unparalleled mobile information and regional data sharing possibilities. Our software allows first responders to communicate wirelessly in times of crisis and in their everyday efforts, advances the capabilities of departments’ drug enforcement and maximizes the time officers are on the streets by reducing their paperwork and creating a mobile office which operates anywhere. All investment dollars were poured into this foundation, critical in its

required superiority for a small business to compete with larger technology companies in the public safety marketplace. Our efforts were extremely successful to the police and sheriff's departments who trusted our company with their limited discretionary dollars. We grew slowly through word of mouth.

Hurting for funds to continue and struggling to gain new business, but steadfast in our efforts to bring a superior product to a marketplace in dire need of a cost effective option we gave everything we are to the presentation of our company, we responded to solicitations and were selected to participate in the technology transfer programs CTAC and CEDAP. CTAC is the Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center through ONDCP, the Office of National Drug Control Policy and CEDAP is the Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program through the Department of Homeland Security in 2006 and 2007. It was a critical step forward for In-Synch Systems and our staff had momentum and hundreds of small communities to seek out with the opportunity of improving their information technology. The program was a huge success and numerous rural departments facing limited funding were able to transition to our product and in doing so increased the efficiency and capabilities of their departments, as well as the safety of their officers. CTAC and CEDAP funding increased our customer base, and in doing so, caused a natural stimulus and spread of the In-Synch name with positive recognition in a crowded marketplace. This recognition has also resulted in In-Synch developing reseller agreements with several larger public safety software companies. After nine years of product development, filled each day with extraordinary employee efforts based on an intrinsic belief in the good of our product toward a common goal of assisting in the promotion of justice nationwide, we saw our first dollar of profit in 2008.

There was limited grant money available to Law Enforcement in 2008 and the economy was making each dollar more and more valuable to our customers. We focused on grants, and this year, the Byrne/JAG funding from the stimulus package will greatly assist our efforts, but revenue driven by grant programs is very difficult to predict. We hope this critical funding continues, but as of now there is no appropriation for programs such as CTAC and CEDAP in the 2010 budget. We currently face continued strain over the need for additional

staff with the question of tomorrow's funding for law enforcement agencies. It is a daily line in the sand for a small software company operating in the arena of public safety.

If only a story of our financial struggle and amazing success could be told in five minutes, would I ever, but let's just say, I'm here today and thirteen amazing people are still working on behalf of the In-Synch product and that is something for which I am personally proud.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to speak with you today, and for your consideration of our efforts and more importantly, those of the law enforcement agencies we serve.